

Agenda Item: I.B.**DATE:** April 15, 2004**SUBJECT:** Master of Science in Nursing, Regents On-line Degree Program**ACTION RECOMMENDED:** Approval

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The personnel shortage in health care professions has been well discussed and documented. The proposed on-line Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) will increase access to graduate nursing education, especially for those aspiring to teach in entry-level nursing programs, manage professional practice work settings, and practice as advanced clinicians in a complex health care delivery system. The use of technology for delivery of graduate-level instruction will increase access to graduate education, especially in remote areas of the state and for practicing nurses, for whom time and flexibility are critical. All six universities in the Tennessee Board of Regents system are involved in the planning and delivery of the proposed RODP-MSN.

The proposed MSN is designed to prepare nurses to teach in a variety of academic and practice settings, provide advanced nursing care to rural, urban and underserved populations. The program also will allow students practice in complex, interdisciplinary settings, assume positions of leadership in the health care delivery system, contribute to the current and evolving body of nursing science, and continue study at the doctoral level.

PROPOSED START-UP DATE: Upon approval

Commission staff has reviewed program proposals according to the academic standards adopted by the Commission on November 14, 2002. Each standard is referenced below.

1.1.20A MISSION: The proposed program is consistent with the mission of all participating universities in the Tennessee Board of Regents System. The RODP model is designed to serve the state, region and nation by providing access to training to prepare students to meet their personal and professional goals, enter a high demand professional career serving the health care providers and the citizens of Tennessee.

1.1.20B CURRICULUM: The proposed curriculum requires 47 - 60 semester hours. This includes four concentrations (specialty areas):

- Nursing Education (37 hrs)
- Nursing Administration (34 hrs)
- Nursing Informatics (32 hrs)
- Advanced Practice (CNS, 41 hrs or NP, 45 hrs)

The major core is composed of fifteen (15) hours:

<u>Course Name</u>	<u>Credit Hours</u>
Theoretical Foundations	3
Health Care Policy	3
Advanced Nursing Research	3
Advanced Role Development	3
Scholarly Synthesis/Research	3

1.1.20C ACADEMIC STANDARDS: The RODP model requires students to apply to one of the six universities associated with the proposed MSN. That institution is then designated as the “home school” and will issue the degree. Admission to the proposed program will be based on the competitive selection of applicants meeting the College of Graduate Studies admission requirements from the designated home school. Additional admission requirements include:

1. Baccalaureate degree in nursing from an accredited program
2. Eligibility to practice as a Registered Nurse in Tennessee or the state in which clinical assignments are completed. Appropriate licensure/authorization must be obtained during the first semester following admission to the program.
3. Minimum 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale
4. TOEFL score of 600, if native language is not English
5. Documents that include resume, discussion of prior professional experience, future career goals, and reasons for pursuing graduate study
6. Three letters of recommendation

Student Projections	Projected Program Productivity		
	Full-time Enrollment	Part-time	Graduates
Year 1	10	30	0
Year 2	10	60	10
Year 3	10	90	40
Year 4	10	90	40
Year 5	10	90	40

1.1.20D FACULTY: In addition to the current graduate faculty qualified to teach in the graduate nursing education programs, at least six additional adjunct faculty members will be required to manage the increased demands of teaching on-line. On-line TBR-RODP graduate fees will fund additional adjunct faculty.

1.1.20E LIBRARY RESOURCES: Three of the six universities that currently offer the MSN have strong collections of journals and related research materials available on-line. Additional materials may be attained through the virtual library, inter-library loan programs and on-line data bases.

1.1.20F ADMINISTRATION/ORGANIZATION: The proposed program will be administered within the current campus structure of each university. One administrative staff and one clerical/support staff person will be required to coordinate the program at the TBR Central Office. The TBR-RODP on-line graduate fees will fund these positions.

1.1.20G SUPPORT RESOURCES: The RODP will provide (at no additional charge to faculty or campuses) all the related course development training, hosting of courses, pedagogy and best practices training for e-learning and teaching, voice board for audio transmissions, 24/7 technical assistance, library resources, virtual bookstore, online student services, recruiting, marketing, and centralized assessments.

1.1.20H FACILITIES/INSTRUCTIONAL EQUIPMENT: Dedicated updated laptop computers with appropriate specialized software may be required for faculty members developing courses. The TBR-RODP on-line graduate fees will fund these costs. Students enrolled in the RODP-MSN will be able to purchase or lease computers from Dell Computers at a discounted rate that is available to other RODP students.

1.1.20I STUDENT/EMPLOYER DEMAND: The shortage of registered nurses in Tennessee and across the nation continues to grow at accelerating rates. The average registered nurse (RN) is nearly 50 years old. Projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that there will be over one million vacant positions for registered nurses by 2010 due to the growth in demand and net replacements of retiring nurses. Current nursing shortages documented in 45 counties in Tennessee are projected to exceed the national shortage through 2020. Entry-level nursing programs have experienced increased enrollments for the past three years; however, this growth is still not sufficient to address the current RN shortage. In order to replace the nurses expected to leave the workforce through retirement, enrollments would have to increase by 40 percent each year. In addition to retirements of practicing RN's, one-half of the current faculty in Tennessee will be retiring within the next five years. The Tennessee Board of Nursing has the authority to close programs, whose faculty does not meet the legally mandated standards of holding graduate degrees. There are currently six associate degree programs that do not meet these standards. Nurses prepared at the master's level in a variety of advanced practice roles are needed to meet faculty requirements and patient needs in a changing health care environment.

1.1.20J NO UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION: The University of Tennessee Memphis offers an on-line MSN. The University of Memphis, East Tennessee State University and Tennessee State University offer the traditional MSN. The RODP-MSN will provide access to students within the TBR system as well as students outside the system. Numerous out-of-state institutions also offer this degree at higher tuition rates. It is prudent and less duplicative for the six institutions in the TBR to collaborate and offer the same curriculum. The Consortium Model will allow universities to share faculty and eliminate the need to hire additional faculty at each institution to teach the nursing specialty areas.

1.1.20K COOPERATIVE INSTITUTIONS: All universities within the Tennessee Board of Regents systems will contribute courses to the curriculum and the RODP graduate fees will fund additional implementation costs.

1.1.20L DESEGREGATION: The program will not impede the state's effort to achieve racial diversity.

1.1.20M ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION: Prior to any action by the Tennessee Board of Regents or the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, all the proposed programs in nursing are required to be approved by the Tennessee Board of Nursing. The proposed program was approved on March 10, 2004.

1.1.20N ARTICULATION: N/A

1.1.20O EXTERNAL JUDGMENT (Graduate Programs): The proposed program is based on principles set forth by the Tennessee Council of Graduate Schools. An external review was conducted by Dr. Norma Stullenbarger, Professor and Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, University of Alabama School of Nursing. Dr. Stullenbarger provided a thorough review and provided the following recommendation: "This program as proposed has the necessary components to offer the master's in nursing program. The infrastructure is sufficiently developed, the committee structure, policies, curricula, and evaluation procedures are in place. The faculty members are well qualified and credentialed in their specialty areas. The appropriate support for web-based instruction will be provided by the RODP. Dr. Stullenbarger concluded that "there is a foundation for a successful program".

1.1.20P COST/BENEFIT/SOURCE: The proposed program is designed to use technology to improve access to high-quality affordable, student-centered graduate nursing education opportunities through cooperation among the six TBR universities. The proposed program will increase access to graduate nursing education, especially for nurses aspiring to teach in entry-level nursing programs, continue studies at the doctoral level, manage professional practice work settings, or receive training for advanced clinicians needed in today's complex health care delivery system.

The proposed program uses technology to increased access to graduate education especially in remote areas of the state and for practicing nurses for whom time flexibility is critical. The proposed program also provides additional options to students enrolled in on-campus programs to expedite the completion of their education. The collaborative on-line model is an innovative cost-effective method of delivery.

1.1.30 POST APPROVAL MONITORING: An annual performance review of the proposed program will be conducted for the first five years following approval. The review will be based on goals established in the approved program proposal. At the end of this period, campus, governing board, and Commission staff will perform a summative evaluation. These goals include, but are not limited to enrollment and graduation numbers, program costs, progress toward accreditation, library acquisitions, student performance and other goals set by the institution and agreed upon by governing board and Commission staff. As a result of this evaluation, if the program is found to be deficient, the Commission may recommend that the governing board terminate the program. Copies of such recommendation will be forwarded to the Education Committees of the General Assembly. The Commission may also choose to extend this period if additional time is needed and requested by the governing board.

BUDGET PROJECTIONS: The following projections provide estimates of costs for delivery of the proposed MSN program during the first full cycle. Some of the workload reflected in the proposed budget will be absorbed through reassignment of existing RODP staff until the enrollment requires the hiring of additional personnel.

OPERATING COST ESTIMATES

Start-up/One-time:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Course Development*	\$78,000	\$120,000	\$144,000
Consultants/Accreditation	5,000	8,515	-0-
Total One-time Cost:	\$83,500	\$128,515	\$144,000

*After the first three-year cycle, course development will cost an estimated \$24,000 annually in order to keep curriculum current.

Recurring:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Administrative	\$95,900	\$97,800	\$99,756
Support Staff	95,500	97,410	99,357
Benefits	37,783	38,533	39,304
Travel	10,000	9,000	9,000
Library	10,000	10,000	10,000
Equipment	5,800	-0-	-0-
Accreditation/ Prof. Memberships	2,775	5,660	5,660
Supplies	5,000	5,000	5,000
Printing/Marketing	10,000	5,000	5,000
Software	10,000	10,000	10,000
Total Recurring:	\$282,758	\$278,403	\$283,077
TOTAL OPERATING COST ESTIMATES	\$366,258	\$406,918	\$427,077

REVENUE PROJECTIONS**

Fees w/o increases \$147,150 \$235,440 \$235,400
(\$233/credit hour + \$94/credit hour)

RODP Central Support \$219,108 \$171,478 \$191,637

**Projections indicate that the proposed program will be self-supporting and will not require support from the RODP central budget after the third year.